



# PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500  
Fax-On-Demand 202 / 418-2830  
TTY 202 / 418-2555  
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>  
<ftp.fcc.gov>

**DA 03-1501**  
**Released: May 2, 2003**

**DOMESTIC SECTION 214 APPLICATION FILED FOR TRANSFER OF CONTROL OF  
BLOUNTSVILLE TELEPHONE COMPANY, INC., AND BTC LONG DISTANCE, INC.,  
FROM PAGE & KISER COMMUNICATIONS, INC., TO OTELCO HOLDINGS, LLC**

**NON-STREAMLINED PLEADING CYCLE ESTABLISHED**

**WC Docket No. 03-101**

On April 15, 2003, Page & Kiser Communications, Inc. ("Page & Kiser") and Otelco Holdings, LLC ("Otelco") (collectively, "Applicants"), filed an application, pursuant to sections 63.03 and 63.04 of the Commission's rules,<sup>1</sup> for consent to transfer control of the wholly-owned affiliates of Page & Kiser, Blountsville Telephone Company, Inc. ("Blountsville Telephone") and BTC Long Distance, Inc. ("BTC") (collectively, "Blountsville"), to Otelco.<sup>2</sup>

This transaction is not entitled to presumptive streamlined treatment pursuant to section 63.03(b) of the Commission's rules. Applicants are incumbent independent local exchange carriers (LECs) that have, in combination, fewer than (2) percent of the nation's subscriber lines installed in the aggregate nationwide, and no overlapping service areas. However, this application is not subject to streamlined treatment because the applicants have adjacent service areas.<sup>3</sup>

Page & Kiser Communications, Inc. ("Page & Kiser") holds a one hundred percent interest in Blountsville. Page & Kiser is an Alabama corporation whose sole business is to serve as a holding company for Blountsville. Blountsville Telephone is an independent incumbent LEC providing service in rural Blount County, which is situated in north-central Alabama. Blountsville Telephone operates two exchanges (Blountsville and Nectar), totaling approximately 3812 subscriber lines. Blountsville Telephone's service territory is contiguous in part with that of each of the Otelco ILECs, as well as with that of BellSouth. Eighty-six percent

---

<sup>1</sup> 47 C.F.R. §§ 63.03, 63.04; *see* 47 U.S.C. § 214.

<sup>2</sup> Applicants are also filing an application for transfer of control of a wireless license. Any action on this domestic 214 application is without prejudice to Commission action on other related pending applications.

<sup>3</sup> *See* 47 C.F.R. § 63.03(b)(2)(iii); *Implementation of Further Streamlining Measures for Domestic Section 214 Authorizations*, 17 FCC Rcd 5517, 5534 (2002), para. 32.

of Blountsville Telephone's lines are residential lines; the remainder are business lines. Blountsville Telephone offers primarily local exchange and exchange access services, together with some vertical services, such as caller ID. Blountsville Telephone also provides broadband Internet services to approximately 25 customers. While no wireline local exchange carrier competes against Blountsville Telephone in its service territory, Applicants state that a host of intraLATA and interLATA toll providers offer services in Blountsville Telephone's service area.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Applicants state that Blountsville Telephone is experiencing increasing competition in portions of its service area from Corr Wireless and Verizon Wireless.

Otelco currently owns and operates three rural independent incumbent local exchange carriers ("ILECs") in north-central Alabama (Otelco Telephone, LLC, Brindlee Mountain Telephone Company, and Hopper Telecommunications Company, Inc.) (collectively, the "Otelco ILECs"). Together, the Otelco ILECs operate approximately 26,155 access lines.<sup>5</sup> Otelco is a wholly owned subsidiary of Rural LEC Acquisition, LLC ("Rural LEC"), a Delaware corporation.

Otelco intends to purchase 100 percent of the stock of Page & Kiser Communications, Inc. Thus, after the proposed transaction, Otelco will own indirectly 100 percent of Blountsville and BTC. After the proposed transaction, Blountsville Telephone will continue to exist and operate its approximately 3800 access lines in its same service territory under the trade name "Otelco," providing service pursuant to existing rates, terms and conditions. BTC will continue to exist after the proposed transaction.

Applicants state that the proposed transaction and related transfer of control will advance the public interest because it will lead to operating efficiencies and more efficient delivery of services for the combined entities. Applicants state that the proposed transaction constitutes the incorporation of one very small independent incumbent LEC into a small family of independent incumbent LECs, and that because of geographic considerations, as well as the modestly larger size of Otelco, the transaction will allow the realization of efficiencies that would otherwise be unavailable to Blountsville Telephone. Otelco states that it anticipates translating such operating advantages into service enhancements and improvements for Blountsville Telephone customers. Furthermore, according to Applicants, the proposed transaction will be transparent to the customers of the companies who will continue to be served by the same experienced personnel serving them today.

Applicants also state that the proposed transaction will have no adverse effect on competition, in part because the Applicants' subsidiaries' markets are individually and collectively so small. Blountsville Telephone and the Otelco incumbent LECs provide local exchange service and exchange access service to a total of approximately 29,967 lines in rural

---

<sup>4</sup> Blountsville's subsidiary, BTC, holds a certificate of public convenience and necessity to provide long distance service in the state of Alabama, and although it has tariffs on file with the Alabama Public Services Commission, Applicants state that BTC has never marketed or provided service to any customer or engaged in any business activity other than obtaining its certificate of public convenience and necessity.

<sup>5</sup> Otelco Telephone, LLC (formerly Oneonta Telephone) operates 8200 lines in two exchanges (Oneonta) in Blount County. Brindlee Mountain Telephone Co. operates 14,012 lines in seven exchanges (Arab, Morgan City and Union Grove) in Marshall and Cullman counties. Hopper Telecommunications Co., Inc. operates 3,943 lines in two exchanges (Snead and Walnut Grove) in Blount and Etowah counties.

Alabama. Applicants' subsidiaries combined access lines constitute less than two-tenths of one percent (0.16 percent) of the nation's access lines, and only 1.2 percent of access lines in Alabama.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The transfer of control identified herein has been found, upon initial review, to be acceptable for filing as a non-streamlined application. The Commission reserves the right to return any transfer of control application if, upon further examination, it is determined to be defective and not in conformance with the Commission's rules and policies. Interested parties may file **comments within 14 days** and **reply comments within 21 days** of this notice.<sup>6</sup> Comments may be filed using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) or by filing paper copies. *See Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings*, 63 Fed. Reg. 24121 (1998).

Comments filed through the ECFS can be sent as an electronic file via the Internet to <<http://www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html>>. Generally, only one copy of an electronic submission must be filed. If multiple docket or rulemaking numbers appear in the caption of this proceeding, however, commenters must transmit one electronic copy of the comments to each docket or rulemaking number referenced in the caption. In completing the transmittal screen, commenters should include their full name, U.S. Postal Service mailing address, and the applicable docket or rulemaking number. Parties may also submit an electronic comment by Internet e-mail. To get filing instructions for e-mail comments, commenters should send an e-mail to [ecfs@fcc.gov](mailto:ecfs@fcc.gov), and should include the following words in the body of the message, "get form <your e-mail address>." A sample form and directions will be sent in reply.

Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and four copies of each filing. If more than one docket or rulemaking number appear in the caption of this proceeding, commenters must submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number. Filings can be sent by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier, or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail (although we continue to experience delays in receiving U.S. Postal Service mail). The Commission's contractor, Vistrionix, Inc., will receive hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the Commission's Secretary at 236 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., Suite 110, Washington, D.C. 20002. The filing hours at this location are 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. All hand deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes must be disposed of before entering the building. Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) must be sent to 9300 East Hampton Drive, Capitol Heights, MD 20743. U.S. Postal Service first-class mail, Express Mail, and Priority Mail should be addressed to 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20554. All filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

**In addition, one copy of each pleading must be sent to each of the following:**

(1) the Commission's duplicating contractor, Qualex International, 445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W., Room

---

<sup>6</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 63.52(b).

CY-B402, Washington, D.C. 20554; e-mail: [qualexint@aol.com](mailto:qualexint@aol.com); facsimile: (202) 863-2898; phone: (202) 863-2893.

- (2) Tracey Wilson, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, 445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W., Room 5-C437, Washington, D.C. 20554; e-mail: [twilson@fcc.gov](mailto:twilson@fcc.gov), and
- (3) Dennis Johnson, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, 445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W., Room 6-A461, Washington, D.C. 20554; e-mail: [dcjohnso@fcc.gov](mailto:dcjohnso@fcc.gov), and
- (4) William Dever, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, 445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W., Room 5-C266, Washington, D.C. 20554; e-mail: [wdever@fcc.gov](mailto:wdever@fcc.gov); and
- (5) Nandan Joshi, Office of General Counsel, 445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W., Room 8-A820, Washington, D.C. 20554; e-mail: [njoshi@fcc.gov](mailto:njoshi@fcc.gov).

Filings and comments are also available for public inspection and copying during regular business hours at the FCC Reference Information Center, Portals II, 445 12th Street, SW, Room CY-A257, Washington, DC, 20554. They may also be purchased from the Commission's duplicating contractor, Qualex International, Portals II, 445 12th Street, SW, Room CY-B402, Washington, DC, 20554, telephone 202-863-2893, facsimile 202-863-2898, or via e-mail [qualexint@aol.com](mailto:qualexint@aol.com).

For further information, please contact Tracey Wilson, at (202) 418-1394, Dennis Johnson (202) 418-0809, or William Dever, Competition Policy, Wireline Competition Bureau at (202) 418-1578.

- FCC -